

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE
IN RE THE APPLICATION OF:

Cotton et al.

Application No: 09/783,367

Filing Date: February 14, 2001

APPARATUS AND METHOD FOR
ADJUSTING THE PRE-LOAD OF
A SPRING

Grp. Art. Unit: 2834

Examiner: Medley, P.

Date: October 17, 2002

Atty. Dkt. No: 99-617



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I certify that this paper or fee was mailed with sufficient postage via first class mail on the 17th day of October, 2002 to the Assistant Commissioner for Patents, Washington, D.C. 20231; Name Printed: Carrie Strenning; Signature Carrie Strenning

RESPONSE TO FIRST OFFICE ACTION

In response to the Office Action dated July 22, 2002,
please consider the following amendment and remarks.

In the claims

Please cancel claims 1-19 without prejudice.

Please add new claims 20-31 as follows:

20. A spring biased mechanism comprising:

a moveable element;

a biasing spring operably coupled to bias said
element toward a predetermined position with a spring preload
force;

a spring preload force adjuster including a
piezoelectric device operably coupled to said spring; and
said spring preload force being at least partially
a function of a voltage applied to said piezoelectric device.

21. The mechanism of claim 20 including an
electrical actuator operably coupled to said moveable element
in opposition to said biasing spring.